What is claimed is:

1. A surgical port device for insertion through a body wall, comprising:

a port body including a tubular section having a distal end and a flexible flange disposed at said distal end; and

a retention member that is slidably mated along said tubular section such that a distance between said retention member and said flexible flange can be adjusted, whereby said retention member and said flexible flange cooperate to clamp portions of the body wall disposed therebetween and thus effectively clamp said port body in place.

2. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said flexible flange is adapted to reduce in diameter when said port body passes through a narrow opening in the body wall.

3. A surgical port device according to claim 2, wherein:

said flexible flange has a frusto-conical shape with a proximally-concave outer surface.

4. A surgical port device according to claim 3, wherein:

said outer surface is adapted to fold in a proximal direction and radially inward during insertion of said port body through said narrow opening.

5. A surgical port device according to claim 4, wherein:

said outer surface is adapted to evert during removal of said port body through the narrow opening.

6. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said tubular section is made of rigid material.

7. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said tubular section is adapted to maintain structural integrity in response to forces exerted by said body wall when said tubular section is angled within a narrow opening within the body wall.

8. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said retention member is made of flexible material.

9. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said retention member is adapted to conform to an outer surface of said body wall when said tubular section is angled within a narrow opening within the body wall.

10. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said tubular section has an outer surface having a plurality of annular grooves; and

said retention member includes a pall that slides easily in a distal direction over said plurality of annular grooves and that resists sliding in a proximal direction by engaging one of said plurality of annular grooves.

11. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said tubular section is formed to define at least one window therein, and said flexible flange is integrally formed with said tubular section via injection molding of material through said at least one window.

12. A surgical port device according to claim 11, wherein:

said tubular section has a distal end which is turned inward, and said flexible flange has an annular projection that covers said distal end of said tubular section.

13. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said flexible flange comprises a hydrophobic material.

14. A surgical port device according to claim 1, wherein:

said tubular section and said flexible flange define a passageway therethrough.

15. A surgical port device according to claim 14, further comprising:

an obturator including a rod-like section having a handle at its proximal end and a conically-tapered tip at its distal end, wherein said rod-like section and tip are sized to be inserted into said passageway such that said tip extends from the distal end of said flexible flange.

16. A surgical port device according to claim 14, further comprising:

a side port, in fluid communication with said passageway.

17. A surgical port device according to claim 14, further comprising:

a valve assembly at a proximal end of said tubular section.

18. A surgical port device according to claim 3, wherein:

said flexible flange includes an annular projection that projects radially outward from said outer surface.

19. A surgical port device for insertion through a body wall, comprising:

a port body including a tubular section having a distal end and a flange disposed at said distal end, said flange having a frusto-conical shape with a proximally-concave outer surface and also having an annular projection that projects radially outward from said outer surface to provide a drip edge adapted to direct fluids around its periphery.

20. A surgical port device according to claim 19, further comprising:

a retention member that is slidably mated along said tubular section such that a distance between said retention member and said flange can be adjusted, whereby said retention member and said flange cooperate to clamp portions of the body wall disposed therebetween and thus effectively clamp said port body in place.

21. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said outer surface is adapted to fold in a proximal direction and radially inward during insertion of said port body through a narrow opening in the body wall.

22. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said outer surface is adapted to evert during removal of said port body through a narrow opening in the body wall.

23. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said tubular section is adapted to maintain structural integrity in response to forces exerted by the body wall when said tubular section is angled within a narrow opening in the body wall.

24. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said tubular section is made of rigid material.

25. A surgical port device according to claim 20, wherein:

said tubular section has an outer surface having a plurality of annular grooves therein, and said retention member includes a pall that slides easily in a distal direction yet resists sliding in the proximal direction by engaging one of said plurality of annular grooves.

26. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said tubular section is formed to define at least one window therein, and said flange is integrally formed with said tubular section via injection molding of material through said at least one window.

27. A surgical port device according to claim 26, wherein:

said tubular section has a distal end which is turned inward, and said flexible flange has an annular projection that covers said distal end of said tubular section.

28. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said flange comprises a hydrophobic material.

29. A surgical port device according to claim 19, wherein:

said tubular section and said flange define a passageway.

30. A surgical port device according to claim 29, further comprising:

an obturator including a rod-like section having a handle at its proximal end and a conically-tapered tip at its distal end, wherein said rod-like section and tip are sized to be inserted into said passageway such that said tip extends from the distal end of said flange.

31. A surgical port device according to claim 29, further comprising:

a side port, in fluid communication with said passageway.

32. A surgical port device according to claim 29, further comprising:

a valve assembly at a proximal end of said tubular section.

33. A method of utilizing a surgical port device that is inserted through a body wall, comprising:

a) providing a surgical port device comprising a port body including a tubular section having a distal end and a flexible flange disposed at said distal end, and a retention member that is slidably mated along said tubular section such that a distance between said retention member and said flexible flange can be adjusted;

b) inserting said port body into the body wall whereby said flexible flange folds back during insertion to reduce its diameter;

c) ratcheting said retention member in a distal direction until said retention member and said flexible flange clamp portions of the body wall disposed therebetween and thus effectively clamp said port body in place; and

d) inserting an optical instrument or manipulating an instrument through said port body.

34. A method according claim 33, wherein:

said surgical port device has an obturator, and said inserting includes inserting said port body with said obturator into the body wall and removing said obturator prior to step d).

35. A method according to claim 33, further comprising:

e) maintaining said optical instrument in place and retracting said port body in a proximal direction to cause deformation of said flange.

36. A method according to claim 35, wherein:

said flange has a frusto-conical shape and said deformation results in flattening of said frusto-conical shape.

37. A method according to claim 35, wherein:

said flange has a frusto-conical shape and said deformation results in partial eversion of said frusto-conical shape.

38. A method according to claim 33, further comprising:

e) retracting said port body in a proximal direction to cause eversion of said flange and removal of said port body from the body wall.

39. A method of operating an imaging device that passes through a surgical port device that is inserted through a body wall, the method comprising:

a) providing said surgical port device, said surgical port device comprising a port body including a tubular section having a distal end and a flexible flange disposed at said distal end, said flange having a frusto-conical shape with a proximally-concave outer surface;

b) affixing said port body to an entrance site in a body wall;

c) inserting said imaging device through a passageway defined by said port body; and

d) positioning optics of said imaging device with respect to said flexible flange and retracting said tubular section in a proximal direction to provide an improved field of view for said imaging device.

40. A method according to claim 39, wherein:

the retracting of said tubular section causes said outer surface of said flange to flatten out flush against an inner surface of the body wall.

41. A method according to claim 40, wherein:

the retracting of said tubular section causes partial eversion of said outer surface of said flange.

42. A method according to claim 41, wherein:

the positioning of the optics of the image device results in the optics being disposed proximally within said flange.